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PROMOTING AND FACILITATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSALS FOR ACTION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS AND REVIEWING, MONITORING AND REPORTING ON PROGRESS IN THE MANAGEMENT, CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF ALL TYPES OF FORESTS: MONITORING PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION

Letter dated 15 July 1998 from the Acting Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the countries of the Six-country Initiative, Germany has the honour to present the Report of the Government-led Initiative in Support of the United Nations Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) entitled "Putting the IPF proposals for action into practice". This International Expert Consultation was held in Baden-Baden, Germany, from 29 June to 3 July 1998.

I have the honour to request you to have the report distributed as an official document of the second session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, to be held in Geneva from 24 August to 4 September 1998.

(Signed) Gerhard HENZE

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GOVERNMENT-LED INITIATIVE IN SUPPORT OF THE
UN INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON FORESTS (IFF)

"PUTTING THE IPF PROPOSALS FOR ACTION INTO PRACTICE"

REPORT

of the

INTERNATIONAL EXPERT CONSULTATION

June 29 to July 3, 1998, Baden-Baden, Germany

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To support the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests in its task to facilitate the implementation of the Proposals for Action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, the Governments of Finland, Germany, Honduras, Indonesia, Uganda, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland joined in a Government-led Six-Country Initiative entitled "Putting the IPF Proposals for Action into Practice". A guide to assess the proposals was developed and six country case studies were carried out. The outcomes were summarized in a Synthesis Report which served as background material for the International Expert Consultation which met in Baden-Baden, Germany from 29 June to 3 July 1998.

The International Expert Consultation was attended by 109 experts from 37 countries from all regions as well as from international organizations, NGOs, and the private sector. The Consultation reached the following main conclusions and recommendations which will be set out in a full report to the IFF:

1. The IPF Proposals for Action are a means to an end, i.e. the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. Their implementation at the national level involves assessment, integration and internalisation within existing national action oriented processes. The outcomes of other international agreements and initiatives should be taken into account in this process.
2. A systematic assessment as developed by the Initiative has been found to be an important tool for implementing the Proposals for Action at the national level and therefore other countries are recommended to undertake a similar assessment within national processes and priorities. A national mechanism to guide and coordinate the implementation of the Proposals of Action is encouraged.
3. The relevance of the Proposals for Action has to be determined at the national level according to national priorities and constraints, taking into account international and regional obligations. The value of the *proposals* is mainly strategic. The operational value, however, is to be derived from their transformation into action in the national context. National forest programmes, as defined by IPF, are seen in many countries as the most important vehicle for the implementation of the Proposals for Action at the national level.
4. Adequate mechanisms for broad and effective stakeholder participation are vital elements for the implementation of the IPF Proposals for Action, e.g. assessment, integration and internalisation of the *proposals* into the national forest-related policy frameworks. This process should build on existing arrangements as far as possible. Awareness building is also essential to ensure that all relevant stakeholders understand the contents, significance and implications of the IPF Proposals for Action.
5. The outcomes of international processes, such as the IPF Proposals for Action, should be communicated to stakeholders groups in a clear and operational manner which facilitates their implementation at the national level. Improved feedback from the international to the national level, as well as within countries, is needed to communicate the IPF Proposals for Action and their implications for national situations. Effective two-way communication should be put in place.
6. The international community should establish well coordinated efficient and effective means to assist developing countries and those with economies in transition in initiating the analysis of the IPF Proposals for Action, and in establishing innovative financing mechanisms for their implementation.
7. Interlinkages with other international instruments and initiatives should be promoted to bring together the various disparate approaches influencing forestry.

Looking to the future, the International Expert Consultation recognized that in order to enhance the implementation of the IPF Proposals for Action, there is a need for effective follow-up beyond IFF, with a view to secure a continued structured policy dialogue at the international level, including issues to be dealt with under IFF Category III.

SIX-COUNTRY GOVERNMENT-LED INITIATIVE IN SUPPORT OF THE UN INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON FORESTS (IFF)

"PUTTING THE IPF PROPOSALS FOR ACTION INTO PRACTICE"

REPORT OF THE

INTERNATIONAL EXPERT CONSULTATION

June 29 to July 3, 1998, Baden-Baden, Germany

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Background

Following the Special Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGASS) in June 1997, the ECOSOC formally established the Ad Hoc Open-ended Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) under the aegis of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) in order to continue the global dialogue on forests. During its first meeting in October 1997, IFF adopted its Programme of Work, which includes the task to promote, facilitate and monitor the implementation of the IPF Proposals for Action (*proposals*) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF). This task will be an important subject for the substantive discussions under the Programme Element I.a (Promoting and Facilitating the Implementation of IPF's Proposals for Action) during the second IFF meeting to be held from August 24 to September 4, 1998 in Geneva.

The *proposals* were agreed upon as the result of intergovernmental negotiations under IPF. UNGASS has adopted the IPF Proposals for Action Report and its *proposals*, which "*represent significant progress and consensus on a wide range of forest issues*". It is now acknowledged by countries that they are under political obligation to give effect to the *proposals* at national level.

The *proposals* suggest measures to be taken at international, regional and particularly national levels. However, it was not made clear by which ways and means countries should implement the *proposals* and translate them into country-specific action to improve their national forest-related policy framework as well as the effectiveness of planning and implementation. Further guidance with respect to national implementation appears necessary, given the following characteristics of the *proposals*:

- the *proposals* are clustered around 11 thematic "elements" and "sub-elements" but necessary interlinkages between the *proposals* are not indicated
- there is frequent repetition and overlap of issues and proposed actions
- *proposals* vary extensively in nature (including basic principles, general guidelines and operational recommendations) as well as their themes
- issues to be addressed are not always clearly identified
- the level of intervention is not always spelled out
- those responsible for implementation are not sufficiently identified, particularly for the national level

- interlinkages with existing international and regional agreements, legally-binding instruments, programmes and initiatives are not clearly identified in political, strategic and operational terms

Several national and regional activities have been launched to promote and facilitate the implementation of the *proposals*. These include national processes in Australia, Denmark, the Netherlands and other countries, the "Interagency Partnership on Forests: Implementation of the IPF Proposals for Action" by the Interagency Task Force on Forests (ITFF), and FAO regional meetings in Asia, Africa and Latin America on "International Co-operation and Resource Mobilisation for National Forest Programmes".

2. Six-country Initiative

In order to support the IFF in its task to promote and facilitate the implementation of the IPF Proposals for Action, the Governments of Finland, Germany, Honduras, Indonesia, Uganda and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) joined in a government-led Six-country Initiative (Initiative) entitled "Putting the IPF Proposals for Action into Practice".

Objectives and Outputs

The objectives of the Initiative were twofold:

(i) to enhance implementation of the *proposals* at national level, and
(ii) to develop guidance from country experiences for consideration by IFF.

The Initiative produced several outputs in the following order:

(a) a Practitioners' Guide to assist countries in the assessment of the *proposals*,
(b) six national case studies on the assessment of the *proposals* at the national level with identification of country-specific approaches to their implementation,
(c) a Synthesis Report based on the six national case studies,
(d) recommendations to IFF and the international community on how to approach the implementation of the *proposals* produced by an International Expert Consultation in Baden-Baden, Germany.

Implementation and Methodology

The Initiative was launched in a preparatory meeting in February 1998, in Bonn, Germany. To assist the six countries in their case studies and to make the results comparable, a "Practitioner's Guide" on the assessment of the *proposals* was prepared by the Initiative. The purpose was to provide a user-friendly, annotated version of the *proposals*.

The Guide was developed as an initial screening process of the *proposals*. It singled out those *proposals* to be addressed at national level. The purpose was to identify the place and addressees of each *proposal* within the institutional setting.

The six case studies were prepared by the co-sponsoring countries from February to May 1998. The *proposals* were assessed and critically reviewed against the national setting in terms of national forest-related policies, the institutional arrangements of the public and pri-

vate sectors, considering the political and socio-economic situation and ecological conditions in each country.

The key questions addressed in the national case studies were:

- which *proposals* are relevant to the national context?
- which actions contained in the *proposals* are already in place or under way, and what is the effectiveness of the actions?
- who is responsible/ influential/ affected?
- how practicable is the implementation of the individual *proposals* and what are the associated opportunities and constraints?
- what can be learned from the national experiences to feed in the international discussion on sustainable forest management
- to what extent is international support required to complement national actions?

The steps designed for executing the national case studies were:

- establishment of a multi-stakeholder task force and secretariat
- briefing and involvement of main stakeholders
- identification of the main elements of the national policy framework (e.g. national forest programme)
- assessment of the individual *proposals*
- suggestions for a national approach for implementing the *proposals*
- preparation of a report on the national case study

It is intended that future steps be taken to continue the national process of implementing the *proposals* in the co-sponsoring countries beyond the Initiative.

Based on the six national case studies, a Synthesis Report was prepared by the Initiative in June, 1998 to capture the essence of the national case studies. The report served as the background material for the International Expert Consultation and will be published under separate cover.

3. International Expert Consultation

An International Expert Consultation took place from June 29 to July 3, 1998 in Baden-Baden, Germany. The specific objectives of the consultation were to:

(i) review the findings of the national case studies and the Synthesis Report on the assessment of the *proposals*, and share information on other ongoing national and regional exercises aimed at the implementation of the IPF Proposals for Action; and

(ii) elaborate recommendations as inputs to IFF-2 for the substantive discussion under the Programme Element I.a. to: (a) foster implementation of the *proposals* at the national level, and (b) to increase the co-operation between the international and national levels, also taking into account dialogues and processes of the international forest agenda other than IFF.

The Consultation was attended by a total of 109 experts from 37 countries in the South and the North, as well as from international organisations, NGOs, the private sector, and development financing institutions. The consultation was organised by the six co-sponsoring countries of the Initiative, in co-operation with IFF Secretariat, UNDP and FAO, in a spirit of

partnership. Two Co-chairs, Mr. Untung Iskandar (Indonesia) and Mr. Hans-Peter Schipulle (Germany), conducted the plenary sessions, and four working groups deliberated on substantive issues.

In their joint keynote address, the Co-chairs of IFF, Ambassador Bagher Asadi and Ambassador Ilkka Ristimäki underlined the importance of the following three facts as a starting point for the consultation: (i) there is now an international consensus on the need for a comprehensive forest policy framework for all kinds of forests, and on the need for engagement by all countries in implementing the *proposals*; (ii) both developed and developing countries have responsibilities and commitments to fulfil, though the situations facing each group, and hence their respective responsibilities, are different; and (iii) successful conservation, management and sustainable development of all types of forests at the global level require that developing countries, both forested and with low forest cover, receive adequate financial and other support, for the generation of national capacity and the preparation and implementation of their national forest programmes.

This report is the outcome of the deliberations of the International Expert Consultation. The report is aimed at summarising the views of the participants and conveying their conclusions and recommendations for the consideration of IFF. The report does not necessarily represent the opinions or positions of the participating countries or institutions. The Consultation did not seek to represent a negotiated consensus, but rather to develop ideas for consideration by IFF. Hence differing views are apparent in parts of the report.

In sections II and III, the outcome of the working groups and plenary discussions are summarised, and in section IV, the main conclusions and recommendations are listed.

II. ASSESSMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF IPF PROPOSALS FOR ACTION AT NATIONAL LEVEL

1. Approach to Assessment and Implementation

The *proposals* are a means to an end, i.e. "the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests" which in the following is referred to as "sustainable forest management". The term "implementation" of the *proposals*, as used in the IFF Programme of Work, means (i) the assessment of the *proposals* against the existing national forest-related frameworks in terms of relevance and value according to national priorities, constraints and ongoing activities as well as according to regional and international obligations, (ii) the internalisation and integration of the *proposals* into existing national processes (e.g. national forest programmes and related instruments in other sectors) and (iii) identification of country-specific actions. This approach ensures that the implementation of the IPF Proposals for Action becomes part of the respective national processes (e.g. national forest programme) and is not regarded as an additional parallel exercise.

Assessment of the relevance of the *proposals* in the national context was considered to be best conducted as part of a broader process of policy development/reform at the national level. The relevance of the *proposals* can be assessed against:

- existing national frameworks, policies, priorities and programmes in the forest and forest related sectors
- existing situation of the forest sector
- urgent national problems within or beyond the forest sector
- assessment of feasibility and potential impact

- other international commitments relevant to the forest sector

Assessment should focus on national priorities, bearing in mind those issues which are regulated through international instruments, such as the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD), the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC), the Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought (CCD).

It was noted that the assessment of relevance is related not only to the priority of the *proposals* within the national policy, but should moreover be used to check on the need for revising existing policies, as was done in some of the co-sponsoring six countries. In other words, an orientation towards issues, including future scenarios, should complement assessment against the existing policies.

The assessment of the relevance of an individual *proposal* needs to cover the current state and the quality of implementation of the measures already taken in terms of their effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The process of integration, internalisation and therefore adaptation of the *proposals* leads to country-specific actions to be taken, within the context of national forest programmes. The actions deriving from the *proposals* should be consistent with national priorities and address key issues and major constraints, taking into account international and regional obligations.

A "mapping" exercise was suggested as a means to identify actors, instruments and linkages with other sectors relevant to the implementation of the *proposals*, as well as the linkages between the *proposals* and other relevant instruments.

The assessment process undertaken by the six countries was seen as a valuable initial experience in devising a possible common approach, while avoiding the imposition of a prescriptive methodology. The participants emphasised that the systematic methodology and tools developed in the six-country exercise could be used as a guide by other countries in devising their own approaches to the assessment of the *proposals*. The main gap in applying the methodology was that inadequate attention was given to evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation, instead of simply recording whether or not the *proposals* were covered by the national frameworks.

One of the key problems was found to be a lack of clarity in many of the *proposals*, especially as to their meaning in the national context. In part this is due to the nature of the negotiated text. In order to facilitate national-level assessment processes, the language of the *proposals* should be clarified and a considerable effort should be made to raise awareness of their meaning and importance. The Practitioners' Guide has been helpful in clarifying some aspects but a more comprehensive review would be useful. Many participants considered this to be a key element in the strategy to achieve a broad stakeholder participation in the assessment process. Another key problem to be addressed is the fragmented nature and overlaps of the *proposals*.

Australia has undertaken a preliminary systematic assessment of the *proposals* using a slightly different methodology to that of the Initiative. The methodology identified the relevance and priority of the *proposals* to the country, at both national and international levels, and responsibilities and implementation status for each *proposal*. This assessment helped raise awareness of the *proposals* at the sub-national level and helped identify potential gaps in the existing programmes.

2. Implementation Mechanisms

Instruments and Mechanisms

The most effective instruments and mechanisms for the implementation of the *proposals* will tend to build on those which are already in place to achieve sustainable forest management, including both sectoral and extra-sectoral measures. The main instruments in this regard are (i) forest sector reviews, (ii) forest and forest related policies and legislation, (iii) institutions and coordination/participation mechanisms, and (iv) various developmental and other programmes. It is also considered important that the implementation of the *proposals* is linked to the implementation of other forest-related international instruments.

Co-ordination of the implementation of the *proposals* would best take place within the national coordination mechanisms established e.g. for national forest programmes. In the absence of established coordination mechanisms, it was considered feasible to establish a special task force and/or an inter-ministerial committee to co-ordinate both the assessment and implementation of the *proposals*. A multi-stakeholder forum (or fora) for debating the key underlying issues may be necessary to ensure ownership and transparency. The chosen forum (or fora) should be at a level, and of a broad enough membership, to deal effectively with the relevant forest issues, taking into account the divergent interests of stakeholders. Such a forum (or fora) should be organised so as to ensure continuity throughout political changes.

It was stressed that, without sustained, high-level political support and commitment, policies and strategies required for implementing many of the *proposals* have little likelihood of being implemented.

It was further stressed that without international financial and technical support, the implementation of the *proposals* in developing countries and countries with economies in transition would be difficult or even impossible.

Organisation of Stakeholder Participation

Participation of all the key stakeholder groups was seen as an important element of the implementation process, to ensure that the relevance and priority to be given to individual *proposals* would adequately reflect different views in society. The participation of stakeholders should reflect their respective roles and stakes in implementation. If put across properly and widely, the *proposals* could present an opportunity to engage marginalised and other groups in the sectoral dialogue and bring in ideas which have been produced by the international consensus of the IPF outcomes. Some participants stressed that the assessment of the *proposals* should be structured to serve as a framework for a facilitated participatory process. It was also noted that the participation could be initiated by involving key stakeholders in the national preparations for IFF as well as other international negotiation processes. However, due to occasionally conflicting views on key issues, mediation and conflict resolution methods may have to be used.

Each country has to find the best way of securing representative participation in the implementation process of the *proposals*, building on existing mechanisms and arrangements, preferably within the national forest programme framework. Based on the mapping of key stakeholders, a participation strategy can be prepared. This would help identify those groups with a stake or interest in forests, and ways to get their views and interests at various levels adequately reflected in the consultative process. The involvement of indigenous

people and local communities is a particular challenge for the organisation of their effective participation.

The tasks in which stakeholders participate tend to be: (i) assessment, (ii) advice, (iii) exchange of views, (iv) identification of actions and their implementation, and (v) monitoring and reporting. In some countries, national working groups have proven useful for organising participation. Effective participatory mechanisms are often best based on decentralised and permanent fora instead of *ad hoc* arrangements. Assigned lead agencies have an important role in securing relevant and efficient participatory processes. It was noted that self-selection, by stakeholder groups, of their own representatives can help make the participation process more efficient and enhance their support for implementation.

There is a need to develop capacity for meaningful participation in policy development and implementation, especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, for which external support is often required.

Targets, Monitoring and Reporting

It is important that the IPF Report and Ist *proposals* are not taken to constitute a standard, criteria and indicators. The implementation of the IPF *proposals* requires nationally-established goals and objectives, which cannot be directly derived from the *proposals*. Targets (or indicators of progress) vary from country to country, according to the national setting as well as their establishment and application.

There were diverse views on whether criteria for assessment and indicators are to be agreed upon at the international level, although the need for a common methodology for setting them up was put forward. Some participants suggested that there is no need to develop a specific set of criteria and indicators for implementing the *proposals*, but those which have been established at national level for sustainable forest management are principally applicable.

Monitoring has two dimensions: (i) the implementation process and (ii) the results, i.e. the extent to which progress has been achieved towards the nationally-set goals and objectives, and the desired status and condition of forests. While some participants supported an appropriate „process monitoring" at the national as well as international levels, it was also advocated to restrict the monitoring and reporting to achievements of the results.

Given the nature of the *proposals*, reporting on their implementation would be voluntary and executed in the framework of national monitoring systems, designed according to national needs. Therefore, monitoring needs to be directed principally at the national level. IFF, as part of the CSD, does not require a separate reporting system, but the existing voluntary reporting for the CSD can be used at the international level. Some participants suggested independent monitoring and/or review as a means to improve credibility.

There are already existing national and international procedures for monitoring and reporting on the progress made in sustainable forest management, partly under the existing international agreements. However, duplication should be avoided and existing reporting systems should be used. They need to be complemented and strengthened to cover adequately the entire scope of the *proposals*. International monitoring and reporting methodologies and procedures should ensure credibility and comparability of nationally-produced information and enable effective feedback on key issues. Countries require useful feedback from the international institutions as an incentive to improve national reporting.

3. Strategic and Operational Value of IPF Proposals for Action

Political Relevance and Implications of the IPF Process

As a consequence of the UNCED process and its follow-up, an improved political awareness on forest issues has been created. It is not possible to separate the influence of IPF from this overall post-UNCED process, including international agreements like CBD, FCCC, and CCDD. IPF has played a significant role in further developing the decisions taken by UNCED and positioning the forest sector in the context of sustainable development. However, the results of these processes are known mainly to the negotiators and the involvement of a wider audience including the policy-makers and practitioners has often been lacking. This includes private sector, NGOs and community-based organisations. As a consequence, there is a somewhat contradictory situation: forestry is well established on the international political agenda. However, it remains a low priority in many countries in terms of actual resource allocation. Other on-going international forest-related processes, such as the regional Criteria & Indicators processes, the Kyoto Protocol, etc. seem to receive more priority than the IPF process. In general, the IPF process is regarded as having high priority mostly in those countries which already assign high priority to the forest sector, or which pursue the notion of an international legally-binding convention on forests.

The following examples highlight the influence of IPF process at the level of individual countries, after about one year for implementing the *proposals*. This is too short a period to assess their real value adequately. In a number of countries, however, some impact can already be observed. In **Indonesia**, the national forest programme has been enriched and better integrated with the national development plan while individual policies are being revised and their enforcement is being strengthened. In **Honduras**, the sectoral consultative forum has been reactivated. In **Finland**, a more holistic approach has been adopted in the national forest programme process, including national and sub-national-level consultations. The *proposals* are also influencing the forest sector development cooperation policies. In **Germany**, no fundamentally new issues have been identified as a result of IPF but the *proposals* have provided a useful framework for a comprehensive review of the complementary forest-related policies, instruments and actions both at national and sub-national levels, and they have facilitated the identification of other sectors' responsibilities for forest issues. Due to time constraints in this initial phase other federal states than Baden-Württemberg and certain issues specific to the national level only could not be covered. In the **UK**, the limitations of fragmented efforts towards sustainable forest management have been recognised and a comprehensive approach is showing its merits in that the "mapping" exercise conducted during the process has pointed to some surprising - and often powerful – stakeholders who had been previously ignored. In **Uganda**, the roles of different stakeholders have been defined and national consultations have started.

In spite of these positive examples of the impacts of the IPF and related initiatives, there are many constraints to be overcome. There is still considerable lack of awareness among stakeholder groups in many countries about the outcomes of IPF and their implications. In many cases, awareness-raising has, for the time being, been limited to government agencies while private sector and civil society are not yet fully involved. In some cases, there is even reluctance among these stakeholder groups to participate when they feel that their views will not be adequately reflected in the outcomes. Limited participation is also reflected in the narrow composition of some national task forces set up for IPF/IFF. On the other hand, increasing efforts are being made world-wide to improve the participation of stakeholder groups in national forest policy processes. This is yielding a higher degree of

consensus on key issues. Nevertheless, there is clearly a need to continue, strengthen and extend these efforts.

Strategic and Operational Value of the *Proposals*

The added value of the *proposals* is derived from several sources: (i) The IPF outcome represents an emerging holistic approach to forest conservation and management globally. (ii) The *proposals* are further-reaching and more action-oriented than the UNCED Forest Principles. (iii) The need for an adequate national policy framework such as a national forest programme has become widely recognised, providing a useful instrument for ensuring holistic implementation. On the other hand, the generic nature of *proposals* limits their direct application at national level. Complementary international and regional-level work (e.g. on Criteria & Indicators (C&I) for sustainable forest management) has proven valuable. Both the *proposals* and C&I outline the necessary steps forward and national forest programmes provide suitable mechanisms to implement them.

As the *proposals* can best be used to assess and enrich the current national forest programmes, their main value is strategic and not operational. The operational value is derived from the transformation of the *proposals* into action in the national context. However, the lack of sufficient human and financial resources represent a constraint in giving effect to the *proposals*, especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The strategic and operational values of the *proposals* are further constrained by their voluntary nature, and by the lack of national ownership due to limited participation and information, especially by other sectors.

III. IMPROVEMENT OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNATIONAL PROCESSES IN IMPLEMENTING IPF PROPOSALS FOR ACTION AT NATIONAL LEVEL

1. Linkages between *Proposals* and with Other Instruments

The *proposals* cannot be implemented in isolation from each other due to their numerous interlinkages. As stated, their main value is strategic, not operational. The issues dealt with under the IFF Programme of Work will largely set parameters for national-level implementation. In essence, most issues need further refinement through the international processes.

Many of the *proposals* have direct linkages with other international instruments dealing with forests (CBD, FCCC, the Kyoto Protocol, CCD, etc.) and the various on-going regional and international processes and initiatives to promote sustainable forest management. A key issue is how the existing international instruments can be best coordinated to contribute to sustainable forest management while achieving their proper objectives. Some participants suggested the idea of an international programme on forests for this purpose.

2. Strengthening of Country Participation in IFF

During IPF, it was observed that many countries were not fully prepared on substantive issues. Preparatory work had weaknesses in terms of available information, participation and the identification of national priorities. Some countries lacked adequate human and financial resources to participate in negotiations in a sustained and effective way. Consistency in government positions was also sometimes a problem. Many countries could not

perceive IPF's work in the context of implementing their own national forest programmes. Foresters were not generally well-prepared to make a clear case concerning forest issues at political levels.

On the positive side, the IPF intersessional events were good at sharing information amongst stakeholders and contributed both to international-level capacity building and to some early direct impacts of *proposals*. This is partly because they were focused on specific issues with high priority and urgency (trade, financing, C&I for sustainable forest management, etc.). They helped stakeholders to clarify common issues, broadening the participation among the private sector, NGOs and other bodies outside government agencies.

There is a need to analyse continuously the implications of international legal obligations and other commitments such as the IPF *proposals* at national level, for which a focal point could be assigned, drawing on expertise available from competent institutions in the respective country. Such a focal point could work towards consistency in government positions in international negotiations, together with other appropriate means.

3. Issues to Be Addressed through International-level Action

Drawing on the results of the Initiative, the Expert Consultation stressed a number of issues to be further addressed at international level in order to facilitate national-level implementation of the *proposals*:

- improved international co-operation to support national-level efforts towards sustainable forest management, including capacity building and "forest partnership" mechanisms
- improved co-ordination and co-operation between multilateral organisations to support national-level implementation; ITFF has proved to be one useful instrument towards this end but more work is needed to eliminate unproductive overlaps and to increase effective coordination without imposing undue constraints on innovation by the involved organisations
- further development of C&I for sustainable forest management and their application at international, regional, national and sub-national levels
- elimination of possible negative impacts of structural adjustment programmes and drastic macroeconomic changes, while providing necessary economic and other incentives to encourage forest owners and managers towards sustainable forest management
- enhancing trade conditions to promote sustainable forest management
- improving financing mechanisms, including the emerging instruments such as carbon offset trading, for sustainable forest management
- making the Kyoto Protocol provisions work towards the broader goals of sustainable forest management
- conservation and sustainable utilisation of biological diversity of forests
- action to address the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation
- prevention and combating of forest fires and containing their cross-boundary impacts
- concerted action and co-operation to solve the complex problem of airborne pollution at international, regional and sub-regional levels
- co-ordination and streamlining of global forestry research to be better geared towards national needs and priorities
- further dialogue and analysis on options for new international instruments to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the *proposals* at national level

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conclusions

Implementation of IPF Proposals for Action at National Level

1) The methodology of the six-country exercise, as well as the tools developed for the process (including the Practitioners' Guide), are valuable contributions for other countries to be considered, applied or adapted in devising and carrying out their own assessment processes. Some countries need financial and technical assistance in conducting the assessment process.

2) Adequate time and resources are needed for implementing the *proposals* in the national context. This was considered especially important, given the participatory nature of the assessment process and the need for adequate communication and information.

3) A focal point at the national level would be useful to guide the assessment and implementation process, including linking national work with international initiatives.

4) The relevance of the *proposals* has to be determined at the national level according to national priorities, opportunities and constraints, taking into account international and regional obligations.

5) Grouping of the *proposals* around the issues of national importance could help to focus the national assessment on the underlying issues. This could also facilitate the assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of implementation.

6) National forest programmes, as defined by IPF, are seen as a significant vehicle for the implementation of the *proposals* at the national level. These programmes are also considered to have high potential for effective implementation and co-ordination at national level, including liaison with other international forest-related instruments.

Participation in the Process of Implementation and Assessment

7) The IPF process, its report and Proposals for Action are known primarily to the IPF negotiators and a limited number of institutions involved, but there is a general lack of broad participation of relevant policy-makers, practitioners, the private sector (including forest owners), NGOs and community groups. Even the forest-sector participants are mainly from central government agencies. This insufficient awareness is at least partly due to the lack of a coherent communication strategy on the relevance and importance of the IPF process.

8) Participation and awareness building are vital elements of the assessment, integration and internalisation of the *proposals* in the national frameworks, ensuring that all relevant stakeholders understand their contents, significance and implications. There is a worldwide move towards increasing stakeholder participation in the forest sector, reflecting the changing roles of government, private sector and civil society.

9) Those countries with existing fora for consultation, debate and participation are in a better position to contribute to international processes, such as IPF, and to benefit from them. To make these fora more effective requires a systematic effort of information-

sharing and dissemination within a country, especially towards the private and other non-governmental sectors.

Monitoring and Reporting of the Implementation of the IPF Proposals for Action

10) National-level monitoring may cover both the implementation process of the IPF *proposals* and its results. Effective monitoring is participatory and transparent, drawing, as far as possible, on existing mechanisms and procedures. In the short run monitoring focuses on progress in implementation and in the long run on results.

11) Reporting requirements should not be duplicative (e.g. FAO, CBD, CSD, ITTO). Emphasis should be placed on the national level, focusing on key issues and priorities under an appropriate framework such as the national forest programme.

12) Targets (indicators of progress) cannot be derived directly from the *proposals*.

Political Relevance and Strategic and Operational Value of the IPF Proposals for Action

13) IPF, as part of the post-UNCED process, has created significant political support to sustainable forest management as a result of high-level commitments. However, the voluntary nature of the *proposals* and lack of adequate understanding and commitment among key actors at national level so far limits possibilities for implementation and impact, particularly beyond forest constituencies.

14) The short time since the completion of IPF and the lack of an adequate framework for reporting do not allow for a full assessment of the impacts of *proposals*. The initial experience in many countries is, however, positive with promising results in terms of policy development and broadening participation of key stakeholders in implementation.

15) The key areas where impact can be observed are: (i) increased dialogue with stakeholders and increased transparency, (ii) amendment and increased enforcement of forest policy, (iii) harmonisation of forest and forest-related planning and policies, and (iv) enhanced co-ordination. It is, however, difficult to single out the impacts of IPF from those induced by macroeconomic changes and other policy processes.

16) The relevance of the *proposals* is clearly related to existing national priorities but should also be interpreted in a broader way to allow policies themselves to be improved.

17) The value of *proposals* is largely strategic, and can be realised through an adequate legal and policy framework, such as national forest programmes

Coordination at International Level

18) There is a need to further analyse (i) interdependence between *proposals* or their appropriate groupings in order to help countries consider them in national contexts, and (ii) interlinkages with other international instruments, in order to bring together various partial approaches influencing forests, towards more concerted action for sustainable forest management and solving related conflicts.

19) The current international situation is characterised by many legally-binding and other instruments which may not effectively address the forest-related problems at the international level. This calls for a continued follow-up beyond IFF, with a view to secure continued structured policy dialogue at the international level.

Interaction between International and National Levels

20) In many cases country participation in the IPF process was weak and needs strengthening during IFF. Broader participation would be useful both in the preparation of national positions and in IFF national delegations. Expert-level seminars have significantly contributed to capacity building at international level.

21) There has been inadequate feedback from the international to the national level and between national and subnational level, and effective two-way communication should be put in place. Also networks between and among stakeholder groups are useful instruments to arrange these communication flows.

22) The Kyoto Protocol offers significant prospects for addressing current problems in forest financing. However, sustainable forest management goals need consideration in designing their application mechanisms.

2. Recommendations

National Level

1) All countries are encouraged to undertake a systematic assessment of the *proposals* and planning for their implementation in the context of their own national processes aimed at sustainable forest management. This should take into account the experiences of the six-country exercise and adapting these to their specific situations. The Practitioners' Guide should be improved to facilitate assessment exercises.

2) Countries should implement the *proposals* in the context of their national forest programme or similar instruments in a co-ordinated and participatory manner. Measurable targets and indicators should be included to ensure effectiveness of implementation. The policy framework should be kept under review so it continues to embody capabilities for inter-sectoral planning, co-ordination and implementation, and adequate resource allocation, particularly at the sub-national level,.

3) Countries are encouraged to set a focal point to guide and co-ordinate the assessment and implementation process of the *proposals*, including facilitation of participation and liaison with the international level.

4) Mechanisms for stakeholder participation should be improved, building on existing arrangements and applying a step-by-step approach. This should start with awareness-raising on opportunities to participate and on the wide international agenda represented by the *proposals*.

5) Countries are encouraged to develop their own ways of organising adequate monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the *proposals*. This could include their implementation process and results, within the context of monitoring national forest programmes.

International Level

6) The results of international processes, such as IPF/IFF, should be formulated and communicated in a clear and practical manner so as to facilitate their implementation at the national level. To achieve this, adequate participation of persons and institutions involved in the management of the forest sector at national and sub-national levels should be ensured along with key stakeholder groups.

7) The methodology developed in the six-country exercise, including the Practitioners' Guide should be made available to other countries. The Guide should be improved to be used as appropriate in national assessment processes.

8) IFF should consider inviting an independent body to prepare an easy-to-understand popular guide to the IPF report and its *proposals*, in all major languages, for broad-based dissemination.

9) The international community should assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition in implementing the *proposals* as needed. National forest programmes should be used as a framework for channelling development assistance for the implementation of the *proposals*. Such support is particularly needed for building up participatory mechanisms and innovative financing instruments.

10) Voluntary reporting to CSD on progress in the implementation of IPF *proposals* should be encouraged by IFF. Based on national experiences and monitoring systems, IFF should develop a common methodology for monitoring and reporting, complementing and strengthening existing reporting systems. Effective feedback from international institutions to countries on key issues should be ensured.

11) In its work programme, IFF should consider the possible implications of the Kyoto Protocol for sustainable forest management.

12) IFF should assess the role and potential of international instruments in supporting national implementation of the *proposals*.